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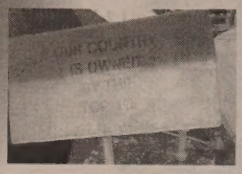
The Musket

LEXINGTON HIGH SCHOOL'S STUDENT-RUN NEWSPAPER SINCE 1969



Occupy Boston
This movement has spread throughout the nation. Find out one editor's experience at the protest.
[turn to page 5]

Sirius Sports
New LHS Quidditch Club, inspired by the fictional sport from the Harry Potter series, looks to be a keeper.
[turn to page 8]

Volume LIII Issue II— December 2011

Frequent Lexpress users save cash with Flexpass

■ Anish Kanesa-Thasan
Staff Writer

Lexpress, the town bus system, recently released a new bus pass add-on that allows students who cannot take the school bus in the afternoon to ride the Lexpress at a discounted price.

The Flexpass was released before school started in August. It costs $10, added on to the original cost of a school bus pass.

However, the Flexpass can only be used on school days on the 4:30 p.m., 5 p.m., 5:30 p.m. and 6 p.m. bus routes.

Lexpress Transportation Services Coordinator Pauline Burke said that the pass is "geared to students who take the school bus in the morning but have after-school programs and need to take a later bus [in the afternoon]."

Those who have not ridden the Lexpress have probably seen the blue buses around town. Lexpress has served the town since 1979, making it one of the oldest transportation systems in the region.

The Lexpress network consists of six routes covered by three buses. The buses alternate their routes every half hour so that even-numbered routes run on the hour and odd-numbered routes run on the half-hour.

The town website states that the Lexpress is funded "by the Town of Lexington, the MBTA, and donations from local businesses."

The Flexpass was instituted in response to an increased need for transportation among students.

The School Transportation Office observed that rising prices for school bus passes were pushing some students, who could only ride the school bus in the morning because of after-school activities, to look for alternative transportation.

Many students turned to the cheaper and more accessible Lexpress system.

"Some routes were at capacity" as a result of the influx of students, Burke said. She added that "while [it tries] to accommodate students, Lexpress is not a school bus."

In order to solve the overflow issue, Lexpress released the Flexpass. Student reaction to the pass has been positive, and several parents have already contacted the Lexpress office with positive remarks.

For more information on the Flexpass, contact the school transportation office.

Staff photo by Thomas Marge

Lexington High School students board their Lexpress bus to be dropped off around town or at their own home.

Assistant debate coach has high hopes during first year of teaching

■ Anisa Haque
Staff Writers

The Lexington High School debate team gained a new coach, Rachel Mitton, this year.

Along with teaching Issues in American History, Mitton coaches the public forum and policy debate classes, helping students prepare for their tournaments.

This is Mitton's first year teaching debate, and she described it as "an enjoyable first experience."

The main challenge of teaching the course, she said, was learning the "debate lingo" that students acquired in their prerequisite novice debate classes. Another challenge was teaching students who already know so much about debate.

"Getting used to how they speak is a challenge," said Mitton. Nevertheless, she still enjoys teaching the class.

Her students also understand the challenge.

"Not knowing anything at all [about debate] she's adjusted well," Diana Cagliero, a sophomore, said.

When compared to the history classes that she used to teach, Mitton described her debate classes as generally having a "more relaxed environment."

Of course, that does not

[DEBATE, page 8]

Jehle has one last task before retirement

■ Jamie Yang
Stephanie Yin
Staff Writers

An educator for more than 33 years, Janet Jehle spent her last three months at Lexington High School working with seniors on their college essays before she retires on Nov. 30.

For Jehle, enthusiasm for teaching began with her affinity for books and a determination to pass on her love of literature to others.

Roanne Bosch, who teaches Freshman Literature, said, "Ms. Jehle has really taught me to have fun and to be creative. She just has so much life and energy that it can't help but be contagious."

On her decision to retire this fall, Jehle said, "At the end of the month, it's my birthday, and I'll have done a certain number of years by then before I retire."

This year, three months in school was not enough to teach a semester class, which led to the formation of Jehle's college essay workshop.

"I never thought of editing college essays before, but I love reading them and learning about the different students," she said.

For seniors applying to college, one of the challenges that they face is writing a personal essay that will introduce them to admissions officers and give them an edge among thousands of other students.

The key is to focus on expressing oneself as a package deal to the best of one's ability, Jehle said.

"You can't psych out your admission officers, they're just people like you," she said. "I always ask my students the essential question: What's at stake here?"

After her work helping to alleviate the annual college admissions stress, Jehle plans to stay busy, even during retirement.

"I want to focus more on my writing and art," she said. "In fact, I met my husband at an art class."

What she will miss most are the kids, freshmen and seniors alike, whom she has taught and known at LHS.

"Ms. Jehle was always full of ideas and enthusiasm," said Christine Lung, a senior. "I had freshmen English with her, and now, she's helped me with my college essays. High school English would have been so different without her. I'll miss seeing her around!"

Last year, in Student-Faculty Senate, Catherine Sillari proposed a bill that would have required the Pledge of Allegiance to be offered at LHS. The bill did not pass, but the debate continues.

Pledge of Allegiance is patriotic and should be included at LHS

■ Catherine Sillari
Guest Writer

Each day, we talk to a great number of people about a variety of topics, some of which are important, and some of which are less significant.

It seems then, that the recitation of the 31-word Pledge of Allegiance to our country could hardly be considered a burden. On the contrary, it is a powerful and honorable way to demonstrate pride in the values that our flag and nation represent.

To pledge allegiance is to voice a commitment to a union larger than oneself. As part of a democratic society, we all have a voice that can be influential in establishing or making changes to the policies that govern our country.

Therefore, it seems illogical for an institution to deny anyone the opportunity to appreciate the republic, which Americans past and present have worked hard to establish, protect and continually improve.

The Pledge does more than just remind us of the position we hold in our government. The words "indivisible, with liberty and justice for all" remind us of what makes America a truly exceptional place to live.

They represent the idea that in America, people of many cultures unite under common rights and all citizens are treated equally.

This phrase represents the sympathy and patriotism that allowed Americans to push through the terrorist attacks in 2001 and stand up as a united and stronger people.

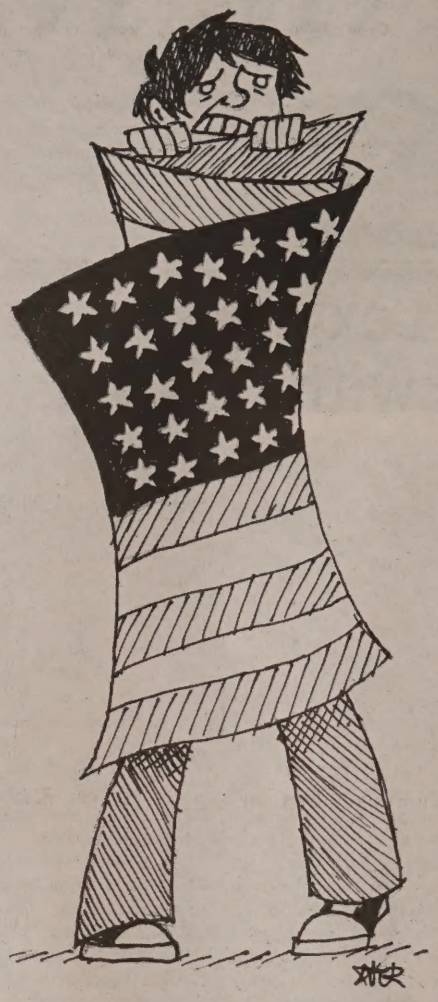
It embodies the sense of community that was present as thousands of volunteers rushed to help Hurricane Katrina victims in 2005. Most telling of all, these words exemplify a nation that never fails to provide resources and aid to regions of the world in need.

Our troops offer the most valuable resource in defending our own country or in giving service to other nations. The five branches of the armed forces consist of dedicated, selfless individuals who too often go unrecognized. The men and women in our military protect and defend our freedom by making huge sacrifices in their own lives.

Even in a small way, saying the Pledge of Allegiance allows us to express our appreciation for all the work our troops do on behalf of our country.

The Pledge of Allegiance, formally adopted by Congress in 1942, opens all congressional sessions as well as local

[PLEDGE, page 9]



Comic by Anna Rodman

Pledge contradicts American values and ought to be omitted

■ Noah Star
Op/Ed Editor

The history of the Pledge of Allegiance is not patriotic, and neither is its recitation. Authored in the nineteenth century by a radical socialist, Francis Bellamy, the Pledge was meant to unite the country and avoid the class conflict of the era.

According to Gene Healy, an expert at the policy think-tank Cato Institute, the Pledge has a more sinister background than many Americans know.

In an article titled "What's Conservative about the Pledge of Allegiance?", Healy notes how the pledge salute was intended: "'At a signal from the Principal the pupils, in ordered ranks, hands to the side, face the Flag ... every pupil gives the Flag the military salute – right hand lifted, palm downward ... At the words, "to my Flag," the right hand is extended gracefully, palm upward, towards the Flag, and remains in this gesture till the end of the affirmation; whereupon all hands immediately drop to the side.'"

Because of the obvious parallels to Nazism, Bellamy's original design was dropped and replaced with a more conservative hand over the heart.

Nevertheless, the difference between the current salute and the pledge's more rigid, militaristic version is minimal. The strictness with which any salute is enforced is analogous to the level of control in a totalitarian regime.

Thus, the commonly held idea that the Pledge is a source of patriotism clearly lacks historical basis.

Even beyond the facts, the Pledge of Allegiance seems to run directly counter to the main tenets of the United States.

This country prides itself on individuality. Supposedly, America is still the great melting pot — a democracy which welcomes all who seek freedom.

Yet, how can acceptance remain the central dogma of a nation that forces children at their youngest and most malleable ages to pledge allegiance to a flag?

Instead of preaching acceptance, the Pledge of Allegiance suggests a definition of America or what it means to be truly "American." However, the question still remains: Is pledging allegiance to a flag actually "American?"

Massachusetts state law mandates the Pledge in all schools, but Lexington manages to fall through the cracks (and should continue to do so).

If LHS were to institute the Pledge, students would have the ability to opt out. However, enforced adherence is unnecessary — right now, students have the opportunity to say the Pledge internally if they choose.

There is no functional difference between saying the pledge internally and saying it externally, and so the only purpose of enforcing the Pledge at LHS would be to give students a time to voice their patriotism out loud.

LHS's current policy does not prohibit anyone from saying the Pledge if he or she wishes to do so, and so this lack of enforcement does no harm.

On the other hand, by making the Pledge mandatory, the school would controversially force some students to participate in a practice which they neither agree with nor support.

LHS should offer course on modern Middle East

■ Zoe Wood
News Editor

What is high school if not a means to introduce students to the intricacies of the very complicated world outside of its walls? What is it, if not a means to make them aware and able to cope with the issues they will face after graduation?

Lexington High School usually serves these purposes extremely well. The standard English, history, science, and math classes create an excellent base of knowledge of the essentials, while programs like the arts and foreign languages help culturally enrich a students' mind. Social studies electives available to seniors cover issues of race and gender, genocide, human geography, mythology, economics, psychology and business, to name a few.

During their time at LHS, students can become proficient in one of seven different languages. In short, LHS offers an incredible and all-encompassing variety of disciplines.

The breadth and depth of the curriculum is such that the omission of one particular subject seems rather jarring: a course on the modern Middle East is missing from LHS's Program of Studies.

The Middle East is a region often misunderstood by many Americans, yet in 2011, it is impossible to fully understand politics or the economy without a basic knowledge of Middle Eastern culture and America's involvement in the region.

Terrorism has unfortunately shaped the reputation of many Middle Eastern countries, painting an unsavory picture of the region and of the individuals who ultimately have very little to do with terrorist attacks.

In order to counterbalance this image, there should be a movement in public schools throughout the United States to add to their curricula a class on the modern Middle East to explain, to humanize and to clarify.

Such a class would be built around newspaper articles and would be mainly discus-

[MODERN, page 8]

Technology enriches in-class learning

■ Christine Kim
Staff Writer

This year, new technology, such as interactive whiteboards, clickers and Elmo projectors has been introduced to more Lexington High School classrooms, allowing teachers and students to experience a new way of learning.

These technologies were funded by Lexington Education Foundation grants.

As the number of these tools increases, they are being used nearly every day in classrooms of all subjects. They are particularly abundant in the science and foreign language buildings.

There are three sets of clickers which are shared among the physics classrooms, in addition to five Elmo projectors. Over the past summer, every earth science classroom received a Smart Board, a type of interactive whiteboard that shows whatever is displayed on the computer to which it is attached.

Ryan Grams, a physics teacher, has used the clickers for three years and the Elmo since last year. The clickers are small hand-held devices with which students indicate their responses to a question. The teacher can then collect the responses and use them to assess understanding or identify confusion.

As with a convential overhead projector, the Elmo allows a teacher to project onto the board whatever is put under the lens. However, making a transparency is not necessary. In his classroom, Grams uses the Elmo every day and uses the clickers at least one a week.

Grams described the clickers and Elmo as easy-to-use tools that both encourage students to engage in class and inform him of how well his students understand the material.

"With the clickers, students can answer questions anonymously without being afraid to answer in front of other students," Grams said. "And they can discuss with each other why they picked the answer, and I can see what material the kids know and what they don't know."

While clickers encourage student interaction, Grams uses the Elmo to show images of students' work and example solutions.

"Unlike making transparencies that are only black and white, I can use the Elmo to take a still of worksheets in color," said Grams. "I can update them onto my website and it also records audio so students can listen to my explanations while looking at the sheets."

The quick transfer from the Elmo to the Internet is part of the reason that ActivBoards are useful in foreign language classes.

In Caitlyn Fong's Mandarin class, the ActivBoard is used every day.

"We use it for PowerPoints and to go onto the Internet a lot of times," said Fong, a sophomore. "We look at websites and we use online workbooks and reviews."

Tanaz Abid, also a sophomore, has an ActivBoard in both her Italian class and a Smart Board in her English class. In her opinion, one of the benefits of the interactive boards is that all the material her teacher writes stays on the board, unlike a conventional whiteboard, which cannot be saved.

However, Abid, who used to go to Belmont High School, does not find that the presence or absence of interactive boards has a major impact on the classroom experience.

"In Belmont, we had [interactive boards] in every class," said Abid. "But here, there are barely any, and it doesn't make a difference."

Several recent New York Times articles have highlighted some of the pitfalls of new

[TECHNOLOGY, page 8]

Newly elected freshmen faced tough competition

■ Kristina Bush
Guest Writer

Freshman election results were released four days later than originally planned due to ties in write-in offices.

The Student-Faculty Senate's Elections Committee revealed that the ties involved the offices of Cafeteria Advisory Board and Board of Appeals.

Before the vote, Tolga Bozkaya, a freshman who ran for Senate, said, "There are 18 people running for nine spots so it's pretty competitive. I think it's going to be close."

The Elections Committee was in charge of preparing the elections and calculating the results. The Committee consists of four senators: Rami Benayad-Cherif and Gregory Muir, both seniors; Kurt Pfrommer, a sophomore; and Jim Williams, a math teacher.

After the voting, the Elections Committee analyzed the ballots. Although in past years the results have been posted on FirstClass at 7 p.m., this year no results had been at the habitual time.

"Due to circumstances out of our control, the counting of one homeroom's ballots was delayed until [Friday] morning," said Pfrommer. "The offices that were tied were determined by write-in votes."

When the Elections Committee realized there was a tie, "There was an overall disbelief," Benayad-Cherif said.

The Elections Committee decided to deal with the ties by calling the winning candidates of the tied offices and asking if they wanted the position. Pfrommer said that he expected some people to decline the positions, and he thought the issue would be solved by Monday.

The final results named Dan Alessandro as freshman class president, James Yu as the vice president, Caroline Berger as the treasurer and Nicole Evans as secretary.

The new members of Senate are May Tomic, Eugene Kim, Eugenia Fomitcheva, Jae Kim, Joe Blumberg, Jongwon Kim, Matthew Reynolds, May Zhou and Mayukha Karnam.

Noah Michelson is the freshman representative for the Board of Appeals, while Tevin Li and Tim Weeks were voted into the Cafeteria Advisory Board.

"I'm most excited about passing bills and creating school laws this year to improve our school community,"

[ELECTIONS, page 4]

An afternoon at Occupy Boston reveals the reality of the protest

■ Jonah Bader
Editor-In-Chief

On one Sunday afternoon, I spent a few hours at Occupy Boston to gain a firsthand understanding of the Occupy movement. In some ways, the reality of the protest was less glamorous than the ideals behind them.

The Occupy Wall Street protests began in New York in mid-September, but the Occupy movement has since spread to numerous other cities, including Boston. This leaderless, populist movement emulates the Arab Spring protesters, especially the hundreds of thousands of Egyptians who occupied Cairo's Tahrir Square in January and February to demonstrate against President Hosni Mubarak.

Despite being a nascent movement, the Occupy movement has met criticism for having an unclear agenda. However, this criticism is unfounded. In the "Declaration of the Occupation of New York City," Occupy Wall Street spelled out its philosophies.

One of the movement's central beliefs is that "no true democracy is attainable when the process is determined by economic power." Like the Declaration of Independence, Occupy Wall Street's declaration contains a list of grievances, condemning high executive bonuses, corporate influence on politicians, costly student loans, outsourcing and manipulation of the legal system for monetary gain.

Occupy Wall Street is not anti-capitalist. It has a list of proposed demands to Congress, including an overhaul of financial regulation, a tax on the superrich and a law to limit the influence of congressional lobbyists.

[OCCUPY, page 9]

Staff photo by Noah Star

The tents set up near a handmade "Occupy Boston" sign are just one of the displays of intense dedication people have been showing to this movement.

TIMELINE

December 17, 2010
Mohammed Bouazizi, a Tunisian produce vendor, publicly self-immolates, sparking a revolution in Tunisia and inciting a wave of revolutions throughout the Arab world.

January 25, 2011
Egyptian protesters first occupy Tahrir Square in Cairo. They were demonstrating against President Hosni Mubarak, who was finally ousted in mid-February.

February 14, 2011
Months of protests begin outside the Wisconsin State Capitol to oppose a budget bill that limits collective bargaining rights for public workers. The anti-union bill passes in March.

July 13, 2011
Adbusters, a Canadian anti-consumerist magazine, calls for thousands of people to occupy a site near Wall Street (New York City's financial district) on September 17.

September 17, 2011
About 1000 protesters first occupy Zuccotti Park near Wall Street. Similar protests in other cities around the U.S. and around the world follow.

September 30, 2011
Initial occupation of Dewey Square in Boston's financial district – Occupy Boston begins.

(Timeline Sources: The Guardian (UK), NPR, The Boston Globe)

Coolidge helps campaign and register voters

■ Justin Kim
Staff Writer

Many seniors hope to make a difference in the world. Usually, that means going to college to prepare for a career. But senior Noah Coolidge decided to make a difference right away by playing an active role in Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign.

Coolidge has always had an interest in politics, and he saw from an early age that people can have a significant impact through their actions. Listening to NPR and reading the newspaper informed him about the political landscape as well as the daily actions that people took to initiate change.

Coolidge did a lot of canvassing for Barack Obama's presidential campaign in 2008, focusing on venues in New Hampshire and Lexington.

"Another thing that I've done is calling people, volunteering calls, trying to get people to volunteer, and that's always difficult," said Coolidge. "It takes a lot of energy, and with one person that says yes, three people slam down the phone, and that can be discouraging, but you just have to call the next person on your list."

In addition, Coolidge held a voter registration drive in Lexington and encouraged people to vote for Obama. Though he did not always feel that the drive was immediately successful, he persevered in his efforts to promote President Obama in Lexington.

Coolidge made a huge decision in spending his time on Obama's campaign.

"I wanted him to win," he said. "Politics for me is sort of like sports; there's the Red Sox and Yankees, and I get the same adrenaline rush in watching a great election as watching an intense basketball game."

When asked about the experience dealing with the 2008 campaign, Coolidge said, "It was really exciting, especially on smaller races when you can actually meet the candidate, and that's always exciting."

Adam Whiteley, also a senior, spoke of Coolidge's efforts to support Obama's campaign. "He is very dedicated and I think it is great that he is doing something that he believes in even though we aren't

[COOLIDGE, page 9]

Feldman, former research scientist, becomes long-term chemistry substitute for Vargas

■ Sarah Zhang
Staff Writer

Jeffrey Feldman is a recently instated long-term substitute chemistry teacher standing in for Christine Vargas, who is currently on maternity leave.

Feldman used to work as a research scientist in bioengineering for Wyeth Pharmaceuticals. Since leaving Wyeth, he has worked as a substitute teacher in many schools, including Clarke Middle School and Lexington High School.

Feldman holds a high opinion of LHS.

"It's a very vigorous school with a bunch of good kids," he said. "It's got a lot of energy in here, and I like that."

He does note, however, one of Lexington High's major flaws, namely its competitive nature.

"I think the LHS students are…very geared towards their grades. And I guess they have to be, but sometimes it detracts from what they are learning because they're more interested in getting just that little piece of what they want to know...instead of trying to get that larger picture."

Still, he added, "Everybody's trying to achieve at a high level."

He is aware of the pressures that many LHS students feel, and sympathizes with the students.

"They work hard and they do what they need to do and there's pressure coming from all different directions," he said.

His students seem to appreciate his understanding.

"He cared about us and learning," said Lydia Gold, a junior in one of his chemistry classes. "I never felt overworked. It was very relaxing and nice coming to his classroom."

Like most new teachers, Feldman does occasionally feel overwhelmed by the new environment.

"Well when you're a new teacher… it's a lot." he said. "There's a lot of moving parts and it takes a little while to get used to."

According to Feldman, Lexington High School's administration was helpful in the adjustment to the school.

"The administration has a very good set of systems set up for the new teachers, so it eases us in somewhat."

Feldman does not find the everyday routine boring. "Teaching is interesting; hour by hour it can be different."

Having worked as a chemist and now as a chemistry teacher, Feldman has lots of valuable perspective on how chemistry has evolved over the years.

"The thing about science is that it keeps moving; it's a moving target. But the thing about chemistry is… at least at the high school… it's pretty much the same."

However, Feldman believes that educational technology has changed drastically, and these advancements have made teaching easier.

On the other hand, some things, like being a substitute teacher, never change.

"It hasn't changed that much because you have to get some credibility first with the students and not get destroyed," he said, laughing. "You gotta take it with a sense of humor and it's a hard job."

ELECTIONS - PAGE 3

said the newly elected Sen. Fomitcheva.

There are only nine senators for the class of 2015 because there are fewer than 475 students in the class. According to the Senate constitution there is to be one senator for every 50 students. All other classes have 10 senators. This means the other classes will have increased power in the Senate.

Along with the results of the vote, the candidates' campaign paragraphs were posted in Commons I rather than on FirstClass this year.

"Mr. Williams, who is the faculty member on the elections committee, and I decided to try it out as an experiment because students in general don't log on to FirstClass and now with forwarding less people do," said Pfrommer. "Commons I is a very visible area that lots of people go through. We figured that they would be visible and that people would actually read it."

However, Kendra Connors, a freshman, did not read any of the paragraphs.

"I do not have time to stop and read anything while trying to get to class because there is only five minutes," she said.

As teaching assistants, seniors gain educational experience

■ Anubhav Jain
News Editor

This year, there has been an influx of senior student teaching assistants in many departments at LHS.

The student TA program, an elective offered to seniors, allows students to understand the teaching and learning process from the educator's perspective, giving them the opportunity to experience the tests and rewards of teaching.

TAs work with the teachers to help students who might not completely understand the material, giving them individual attention during class.

TAs also help with daily classroom tasks such as passing out worksheets, checking homework and making copies. Sometimes, they do more complex tasks, such as teaching the class a lesson.

Most of the seniors in the program had no teaching experience before they became teaching assistants.

"Besides occasionally helping friends and explaining problems, I didn't have a lot of experience in the classroom when I started," said Amy Zhang, who is a TA in a geometry class.

Being a TA is rewarding in many ways.

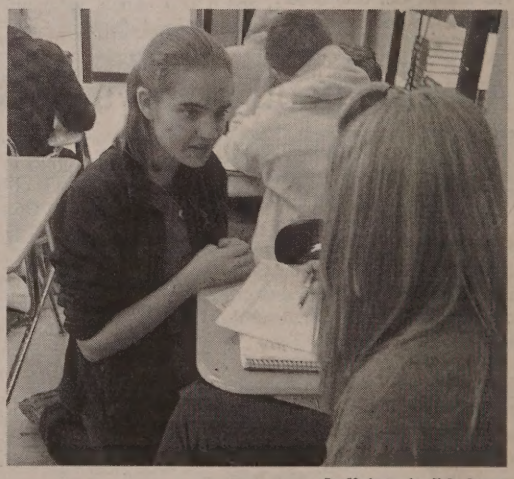
"I love seeing the kids in my class in other places at school," said Allison Bukys, a TA for Algebra I. "I also love it when I can see how my actions affect their learning … the 'eureka moment' when someone understands what you're saying is incredibly rewarding."

Amy Kridaratikorn, also a TA in an Algebra I class, confirmed this feeling of accomplishment.

"I feel as if I have made a difference in the class and in some student's learning by just being there and [being] ready to answer any questions they may have," she said.

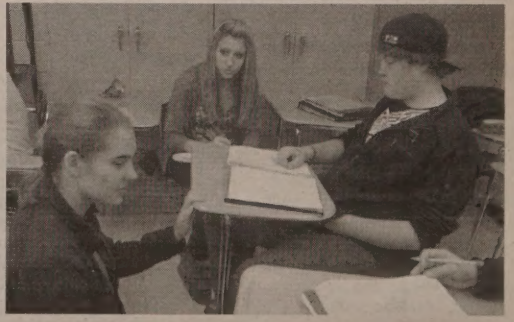
Participants in the TA program come to understand effective teaching methods.

"Being a TA has made me more aware of the different ways that teachers try to communicate ideas to students, and more observant of the types of activities or methods that are most effective," Zhang said. "I would recommend it to anyone interested in a possible future in education, or anyone who enjoys helping other students learn."



Staff photos by Ji-In Jeong

Senior Lauren Yates, a teaching assistant in Ms. Lifrieri's Algebra 1B class, helps freshmen Sydney Massie and Will Forman with an assignment.



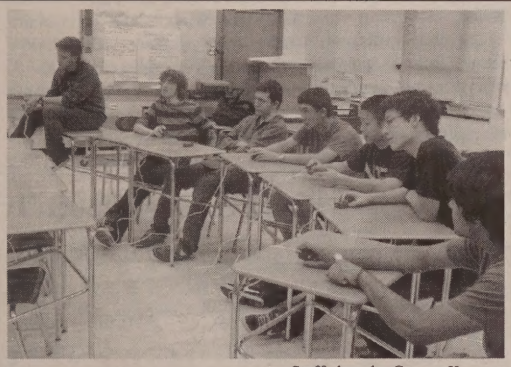
CHAMBER ORCHESTRA'S PREMIERE CONCERT - On Oct. 27, the newly formed Chamber Orchestra (shown above), the student-directed Percussion Ensemble and the Wind Ensemble played in the Fall Instrumental Concert, the third in a series of fall concerts displaying the vigor and talent of the music program at LHS. The Chamber Orchestra, directed by Janet Haas, performed two selections. After a piece by the Percussion Ensemble, the concert concluded with three selections performed by the Wind Ensemble, directed by Jeffrey Leonard.

Staff photos by Arman Bilge

Above, Soloist Brian White, a sophomore, performs the first movement of Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in D. He performed his solo during Chamber Orchestra's second piece at the Fall Instrumental Concert on Oct. 27.

History Bowl Club hopes to compete in nationals

■ **Alice Ren**
Hannah Kwon
Staff Writers



Staff photo by Geneva Kropper

Members of the National History Bowl practice their competition skills using the team's buzzers.

Although Lexington High School has a wide variety of academic clubs, National History Bowl Club is the first created for history-loving students.

Formed this year, the club has already established the goals of participating in the national competition and providing an outlet for LHS history buffs to both exercise their knowledge and have fun while doing so.

Juniors Zaroug Jaleel, Vikas Shiva and Anish Kanesa-Thasan are co-captains of the club. The History Bowl competition itself started last year, and Jaleel was the first student from LHS to compete in it. He won the state competition and qualified for Nationals but did not have the time to attend it.

"[Jaleel's experience] is how we found out about [the competition]," said Shiva, "and we started the club this year in order to allow us to make a team that could get into Nationals."

Because the History Bowl is new, competition is relatively low. The club is allowed to have up to four teams, so almost everyone can compete, Jaleel said.

Both Shiva and Jaleel are optimistic about the club's chances at the national level, especially because the academics at LHS are so strong.

The club, however, does not focus solely on reaching the national competition.

"We're definitely going for the competition but [the club is] mainly about having fun and mainly for kids who love history," said Jaleel. "It's a really good competition, it's brand new, so there's definitely a lot more room for experimentation [and] a lot more leeway... It's mainly a really lax club."

During meetings, members answer questions about history in preparation for the competition, Shiva said. He and the other captains present questions that are arranged in order of difficulty.

The club recently acquired a proper buzzer system to prepare for the competition.

"Now we can actually do serious competition, and so that's nice," said Patrick Neal, a junior. "Basically, we're just preparing and trying to learn as much as we can."

There are currently about 12 members in the club, which continues to grow, Shiva said.

Their supervisor is Erin Barrett, an AP World History teacher, who often "[answers] some of the questions that the kids [don't] get," said Shiva.

However, the club is mainly student-run, and it is organized for students "to show off their history prowess," said Barrett.

History Bowl meets after school on Wednesdays from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. The meeting locations vary, but the co-captains are trying to secure Room 225.

Test Your History Prowess!

'His 'dollar diplomacy' proved to be a largely ineffective foreign policy, and he was much happier as a Supreme Court Chief Justice than as a President. He was also the only sitting president to finish third in the Electoral College in a presidential election, in the election of 1912. For 10 points, name this president who, though he lived a long life, was obese and once famously got stuck in the bathtub. (Answer on Page 8)

Dahleh combines math, linguistics in research

■ **Hoda Yehia**
A&E Editor

Unless required by teachers, work is not usually on students' minds during the summer. But this is not the case for Lexington High School senior Taher Dahleh, who embarked on many of research projects between April and August of last year.

One portion of his research included looking through past yearbooks and "catalog[ing] the quotes of each student in hopes of identifying any patterns in type of quote and who is the most quoted," wrote Dahleh in an email.

Harriet Wallen, the LHS yearbook adviser, said that there are often "a lot of people using yearbooks all the time for lots of things." However, she has never seen a project like Dahleh's.

"It's really cool though," she said. "There are indeed particular people who are quoted over and over again ... I wonder if it has to do with popular culture, or the … political times, or things like that that affect what people pick."

In addition to his project on yearbook quotes, Dahleh's research also involved "trying to find a mathematical way by which to categorize the complexity of a language," he wrote.

To do this, he used a computer program called Matlab to "[define] the complexity of a language to be its uncertainty of what the next word would be given a set of words."

Using these calculations, he started comparing the complexity of certain languages with others, and reached some interesting conclusions.

"It turns out that French has a lower uncertainty (complexity) than English does," said Dahleh. "This is because there are more fixed prepositions…[thus] it is more likely that I will be able to predict the next word given a sequence of n-words."

To put it in simpler terms, Dahleh said, "If I have a text that makes absolutely no sense, but in which no words are repeated, my computation will tell me that this text has the highest complexity. If I analyze a well-respected literary novel, the word 'the' … will appear in almost every sentence, [resulting in] a very low level of uncertainty."

Dahleh said that his original goal was to find the complexity of the Arabic language. But with the Arabic texts, "calculations broke down because the text was unreadable," he wrote. Therefore, he began working with other languages, such as French and Italian.

Having taken many years of Arabic, seven years of French and three years of Italian, Dahleh felt that his considerable exposure to

[DAHLEH, page 9]

Commentary from China: How Cuisine Shapes Life

■ Maria Ivanenko
Columnist

I've been living in China for about three months now, and it's already become clear how intricate the cuisine and food culture is here.

It's often stereotyped that Chinese people eat a lot of rice, and that is actually the truth. At every meal, each person has a bowl of rice and a set of chopsticks. Forks are rarely seen here.

For my family of four, there are usually around three dishes and one soup, all placed in the center of the table. Whatever is left over is then used the next morning for breakfast noodles. The noodles consist of the soup from last night, as well as little bits from every dish. Other breakfast foods include bread, dumplings and glutinous rice balls.

The dishes here also have a lot less meat than in the United States, though some dishes do include meat. The meat is usually cooked with some vegetables or hot pepper or is put in the soup.

Many of the dishes are vegetarian and most are fried. The simpler dishes consist of meat and diced vegetables that are fried, salted and peppered. The more complex ones may be chopped differently or seasoned with more spices, but the frying element is always present. This definitely surprised me because it seems like most Chinese people are extremely skinny, despite a diet full of oil.

Soups here are usually simple with very little flavor. They are not the hearty soups that I've grown used to back home. Instead, they are more like the beverage at the end of the meal. During the meal, there is no other drink that is served. If you would like a drink, you would take it before or after the meal. Here, soup serves as your healthy drink to wrap up a meal.

There is a great variety of food eaten here. There are common vegetables, such as corn and carrots, and there are really exotic foods. I've eaten frog and snake, which are pretty hard to find in Lexington.

Macaron shop off to sweet start

■ Evaline Han
Staff Writer

The Macaron Sweeterie, a new boutique that specializes in French macarons, opened up six months ago on the corner of Independence Avenue and Massachusetts Avenue in Lexington.

"I [always] knew I was going to open a shop someday, but I didn't know what kind," owner Sella Abalian said.

Her decision to open the Macaron Sweeterie has been a success that brings a unique taste of Europe to Lexington.

The café offers a dazzling array of French macarons, Italian gelatos and other delicacies, with 13 flavors of macarons that come in packages of six, 12 and 24; 13 flavors of gelatos; three kinds of sorbets; and 11 assorted beverages, including espresso coffee.

The shop's claim to fame is its gluten-free macarons, which sell for $2.10 each.

The macaron is a "colorful, sweet cookie," said Abalian's daughter, Sirena, a freshman at Lexington High School who helps out at the shop after school. Often confused with the macaroon, it is actually a kind of pastry that is "crispy on the outside [and] chewy on the inside," Abalian added.

The Sweeterie's macarons are fragrant and can be sweet or tart. Abalian recommended the honey-lavender, almond and lemon flavors, while her daughter recommended caramel and chocolate.

In addition to macarons, the Sweeterie also sells gelatos and sorbets. Prices range with the size, from bambino (one scoop) at $2.75, to medio (three scoops) at $4.25, to eight scoops to-go at $13.95. Sella and her daughter both recommended the caramel brownie gelato.

The wide variety of drinks ranges from an espresso solo or an americano for $1.50 to the one-pound Macaron Sweeterie café blend for $13.95.

Unique to the Macaron Sweeterie, Sirena said, is the macalato, two macaron shells with gelato as filling. Another specialty is the affogato, a scoop of gelato with a shot of espresso.

Staff photo by Geneva Kropper

A window arrangement at the Macaron Sweeterie displays the wide variety of macarons that they offer.

Inside the shop, macarons are artfully hung up in the display window and benches are lined up under the window where customers may sit. A counter, separating the area for customers from the larger preparation area, doubles as a display for the Sweeterie's macarons and gelatos.

The café is brightly lit and tastefully decorated in shades of blue and brown. Delightful French music plays in the background.

The service is excellent, as Abalian and her daughter are both helpful, polite and accommodating.

The Sweeterie's macarons, which are not as brittle as they first appear, are deliciously addictive. The gelatos are likewise first-class.

Behind the scenes: House secretaries run LHS

■ Catherine Qin
A&E Editor

House secretaries, who work tirelessly to make the school run smoothly, are an integral part of the administration at Lexington High School. Yet, their efforts are often taken for granted, as the details of their daily lives remain, for the most part, out of the public eye.

What does a typical day as a house secretary entail? Christine Ashness and Marlene Couture, house secretaries in the Main and Foreign Language buildings, respectively, explained.

From 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., secretaries take care of everything from distributing teachers' mail to keeping track of students' attendance.

"A lot of juggling makes the day go by very quickly," said Ashness, who has been a house secretary at LHS for the past two years.

Every morning, the house secretaries check the mailboxes in the main office.

Then, said Couture, "We get on our computers [and] we print out the track-down, which is a list of kids and what classes they were not present for. [We] go through the track-down, and [then] the kids start coming in with their notes or coming in tardy."

Attendance is their primary concern.

"It's all day, and it's nonstop, block by block," said Couture. "[Students are] in, they're out, they're back, they're forth, they come and they go.

"The next main thing is probably detentions," she said. "Keeping track of detentions – who came, who didn't, who rescheduled – and making all the changes in attendance when [it's] not marked correctly. We [also] watch kids when they come down for discipline."

Record keeping is another large responsibility.

"We keep all of the kids' information – their contacts and everything," said Ashness.

In addition to safeguarding all the records, house secretaries also facilitate much of the communication that goes on between students, parents and teachers at school.

"We call home on kids that were out the day before that we never heard from," said Ashness. House secretaries are also in charge of putting notices, detention slips and announcements in all of the homeroom folders.

"When parents call in, [saying] 'so-and-so forgot their lunch,' we get them a note, or 'so-and-so needs their homework.' we get them a note or 'here's their gym stuff,' we get them a note," said Couture.

Staff photo by Arman Bilge

Ms. Couture, secretary to Dr. Kilpatrick, makes photocopies as part of her secretarial duties.

Another major secretarial duty is assisting the deans.

"We work pretty closely with the deans," said Ashness. "We schedule appointments for [them]. We take care of their schedules."

With a multitude of tasks to perform, there never seems to be a moment of rest in the house office.

"There's never nobody popping in," said Couture. "The counselors come in and they have questions; the teachers come down. Kids pop in all day long"

Both Ashness and Couture agree that the best part of this daily whirlwind is interacting with the students.

"We get to know the kids really well," said Couture. "Working with the kids, that's what we like. That's what it's all about."

Davis goes to Caribbean for service

■ Grace Ma
Claire Huang
Staff Writers

Last summer, on Tortola, the largest of the British Virgin Islands, Lydia Davis and other student volunteers aided the local community, working to raise living standards. They volunteered at an orphanage where they improved buildings, harvested vegetables on a subsistence farm and helped at an animal shelter.

Davis, now a sophomore at LHS, took part in the Visions Service Adventures' community service program, in which she spent three weeks on the British Virgin Islands.

One of the most rewarding experiences, Davis said, was constructing a new bed for a disabled child who had originally slept in a crib.

"Before going on the trip, most of the community service I did didn't really help people," Davis said, "but I really made a difference on the island." After three weeks, she earned a total of 75 service hours.

However, the trip was not exclusively work. Besides community service, Davis was able to take advantage of the unique opportunities available on the Caribbean islands, such as scuba diving and swimming with dolphins. The natural environment and location of the summer program opened up new possibilities to the high school student.

"The island of Virgin Gorda was amazing. We went to the Baths, which are beaches covered in stones, and we explored these underwater caves," she said. "I even went cliff jumping."

Davis and her peers also engaged in cultural activities in the towns. Communicating with local civilians allowed the volunteers to adapt and to discover many aspects of the island culture that differ from American culture. For example, Davis was surprised to hear many cars frequently honking at each other on the roads.

"At first the honking seemed rude, but we found out that it was actually a greeting between drivers," she said. "Everyone was friendly, and they all seemed to know each other."

Though she has met the community service hour requirements for the school, Davis says that she may consider going on another Visions trip in the future. For her, service has become more than just an obligation.

As Visions Executive Director Katherine Dayton wrote in a press release, "Service is a powerful bridge to friendship and learning.... [The participants] live for a while in a very different world from what they typically know, engaging in activities that build confidence and offer first-hand knowledge. Over the course of a month, they come to know the people whose lives they are impacting."

The Visions organization accepts applications from all high school students, and students can select from a variety of destinations around the world. For more information, visit http://www.visionsserviceadventures.com/.

Schools aim to improve education via e-books

■ Rae Yen Tan
Staff Writer

Several high schools in Massachusetts recently made the transition from print to e-books, begging the question: Should LHS consider a switch to electronic books?

Cushing Academy, a private school in Ashburnham, recently replaced all of its library books with e-books.

"The decision to get e-books was made pretty quickly," said Tom Corbett, executive director of the Fisher-Watkins Library at Cushing Academy. "Our argument is that as the 21st century progresses, reading and certainly research will be conducted online, from middle school on up past college. We wanted to prepare our students for that near future by focusing on digital content at the high school level."

Cushing has received positive feedback from its students about the switch to e-readers, Corbett said.

"Our big readers now get more access to books than they ever could before," said Corbett. "More reluctant readers often try out the Kindle and discover they like it and read more. Our ESL students like the text-to-speech feature and all students like the built-in dictionary."

The benefits of using e-books in school are clear. Instead of carrying around heavy and possibly outdated textbooks, students could hold all of their documents and textbook materials in a single e-book. It is also easier to update e-books with new information.

Bedford High School introduced e-books to their ninth-graders in early October this year.

"[E-books] are powerful vehicles for deepening and extending the learning process," said Jon Sills, the principal of Bedford High School.

Although the Lexington school system does not cur-

[E-BOOKS, page 8]

collegebored

The early bird gets the worm

■ Ben Edelstein
Columnist

Today was an interesting day, as I submitted my first college application.

Now, some of you are probably thinking, "Aren't applications due in January? He must be so proactive!" — and while I would like all of my readers to think highly of me, I really only submitted my application two days before the deadline. That is, the early decision deadline.

It all started a few months ago when I visited a college that I have since grown quite fond of. It was a good fit academically, offering great programs in the fields that I would like to study, and it also had a great location in a large city.

Most importantly, I felt like I really connected with this school, and it just felt right when I was there. I could really imagine spending four years of my life living and studying there — it was perfect.

When I got home, I started researching the best ways to apply to this school, because after all, colleges are quite competitive these days. And what my good friends on the forums of collegeconfidential.com kept saying was that the best way to get in was to apply early decision.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with the various methods of applying to colleges early, allow me to explain: Some schools offer a program called "early decision," through which students can apply with the expectation that, if they are accepted, they will matriculate. Under an early decision contract, an accepted student cannot apply to any other institution.

Other schools offer what is called "early action," which gives students a chance to find out if they are accepted into the school early, but allows them to apply to other schools in January during the regular application period.

Colleges originally designed these programs for a few reasons. Applying under an early decision contract allows students to prove to a

[COLLEGE, page 8]

Fall fashion: Crew designs outfits worn in fall play

■ Julia Sun
Layout Designer

A patch sewn up with a stitch, a ribbon secured with an assortment of clothing: all of these images mark the countless hours of work that the Costume Crew puts into the fall play and spring musical every year.

The Costume Crew is currently composed of five students. During the spring musical, Anne Carey, who teaches dance, serves as their faculty adviser.

Every day they meet in the costume closet from 3 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. in order to plan, brainstorm and alter the costumes that the drama department has charged them with producing. A week or two before the actual production, they may end up staying until 11:00 p.m. in order to put the final touches on the costumes.

For only five students, the group holds an enormous responsibility. They make all of the original costumes, apply make-up for the actors, fix wardrobe malfunctions, and help the actors with quick changes during performances.

Staff photo by Adam Forstall

The Costume Crew spends many hours in the costume room, finding and fixing wardrobe pieces for each actor.

Costume Crew members undertake a lengthy process to create the perfect costumes. Oftentimes, they must go out and buy clothes from bargain stores; at other times, they pick out clothing from their growing store of past costumes. They then change these articles of clothing to fit the play and each actor's needs. Through dyeing, sewing and hot-gluing, the Costume Crew transforms unremarkable pieces of clothing into elaborate costumes.

"It's incredibly rewarding to see pieces that you know you made on stage and adding to the atmosphere of a production; seeing your creativity put to use," said Leah Mirani, a sophomore who participated in the production of "The Mystery of Edwin Drood" last year.

The fall play is usually a more difficult production than the spring musical for the Costume Crew, because the play is written and directed by students, who only give them a central idea to work with. The actors may request certain types of costumes, but the designers must use their own judgment when creating them.

This year, the Costume Crew was told to work with '20s styles for the fall play, which took place on Nov. 17, 18 and 19. They worked to perfect these costumes to fit the measurements and interpretations of each actor.

Throughout the design process, the students of the Costume Crew have bonded deep-

[COSTUMES, page 8]

DEBATE - PAGE 1

mean that the students work less for this class. In fact, Mitton described the extensive time commitment the students must make for her debate classes, which require both in-class and after-school preparation tournaments. Tournaments can last up to three days, requiring students to spend time dealing with make-up work.

The first debate tournament that she attended was the Yale tournament for her Public Forum class, which she called a "crazy experience." She was asked to help judge the tournament, and she said that she was "nervous because she wanted to make the right decision" as to who won the round.

Mitton has to do a considerable amount of work to prepare her students for these tournaments because the debate topic changes every month in her Public Forum class; in her Policy Debate class, the topic stays the same year-round.

During class, she and her students brainstorm ideas about both the pros and cons of the current issue, because the students will not know which side they must argue until the day of their round.

Although Mitton does not have a background in debate, her students did not feel that being coached by a new teacher was a disadvantage.

"It's not a problem in public forum because it's judged by someone who doesn't know about the topic," said David Atkins, a junior in her public forum class. " We're lucky having her."

TECHNOLOGY - PAGE 3

technology in the classroom. According to the Times, some school districts in the United States are upgrading technologically but have not seen test scores rise. Furthermore, new devices can be distracting for students.

Grams also mentioned another drawback to this technology. The Smart Board was an additional piece of equipment that he had to fit into his classroom. Rather than replacing other tools, it only added to the tools he already used in class. He explained that interactive boards, clickers and Elmos are a means rather than an end.

"All the technology in the world is a just a thing," Grams said. "It's about the interactions between teachers and students."

MODERN - PAGE 2

sion-based. Though focused on current events, the course would need to delve into the history of the region as well in order to follow cause-and-effect patterns.

In other words, after examining and discussing a historical event, the course would move to modern events that are related to that particular moment in history.

LHS currently has a course called Conflict in the Modern World, which was added to the curriculum recently. It was developed and is taught by Shane Wilson, who also teaches Popular Culture and United States History.

"Our textbook is The New York Times," he said of the class, which is "50 percent history, 50 percent current events."

Modern conflict includes everything from World War I on, including World War II, Vietnam, and the Iraq War.

The class is "all-encompassing," Wilson said, as it focuses on whatever happens to be on the front page of The New York Times.

Conflict in the Modern World is certainly similar to what a Modern Middle East course would be like, as it focuses on how current conflicts have evolved over the past century.

However, the range of topics that could be studied modern conflict is broad, and its focus is on "the United States' evolving role and response in world conflicts from the turn of the last century to the current war on terror," according to the Program of Studies.

Unlike Modern Conflict's wide range of topics, the modern Middle East course would focus on Middle Eastern cultures, language, religions, art, government and history instead of simply concentrating on conflict in the Middle East seen from an American perspective.

That is not to say that the modern conflict class is not important, but rather that it does not provide a detailed look into the society of the Middle East.

"There's always room for new classes," said Wilson. "The fact that there are 26 history electives available to juniors and seniors says a lot about our school."

All that is necessary to introduce a new class is a willing teacher and an interested group of students. Considering today's headlines, a course on the Modern Middle East would certainly be a valuable addition.

CHINA - PAGE 6

ton. And they don't even taste that bad - they actually taste like chicken.

The number of tools that the Chinese use to make food is also different. My family's kitchen here has only two knives, one pan, one pot, one rice-cooker and chopsticks.

Back home, I have 20 knives, many pots and pans crowding the cupboard, as well as a panini grill, toaster, waffle maker and other food-making devices. Not much is required to make Chinese food, which is surprising given the variety of food found here.

Spiciness is another important characteristic of the food here. Hunan/Sichuan cuisine is known for its spiciness, which is apparent everywhere, from the whole row of hot pepper sauces at the supermarket to the上火 sickness I had from eating too much spicy food. However, I adjusted quickly, so that after two months, nothing really tastes that spicy anymore.

The method of eating is also different. You take your bowl of rice and eat a little from it, then you grab a chopsticks-ful of food from one of the collective dishes. Then you eat a little more rice, repeating the cycle until you're out of rice. At this point, you can either get more rice if you're hungry or finish eating.

All Western table manners are disregarded here. You can talk with your mouth full, spit bones out onto the table, and make loud noises while you eat. Everything my mother taught me not to do is done here.

The best part about all the food is that it doesn't taste anything like the Chinese takeout in the United States. And just like the fake Chinese food in America, they've got fake Western food in China that tastes pretty strange because it is infused with Asian spices.

It is the variety of the cuisine here that makes me excited to eat all types of food. Whether at home, in a restaurant or from the street, the food is always different, which always make eating exciting.

DAHLEH - PAGE 5

language had contributed to his interest in studying it.

Dahleh's research was "almost entirely individual" but was "advised by a professor of applied math at Harvard," he wrote. He hopes to eventually finish his project by "writing a code which can count a larger set of words."

E-BOOKS - PAGE 7

rently have any e-books, some students at LHS have expressed interest in switching to e-books.

"Electronic textbooks would be much more convenient and environmentally friendly, because they save weight and paper," said Filip Bystricky, a sophomore. He added that a switch to e-books would be cost-effective, too, because the school would not longer have to buy new textbooks for every student when old textbooks become out-of-date. "This big investment will eventually pay off."

If LHS upgraded to e-books, Bystricky said, he would prefer the Kindle Fire or the Nook Color, citing these devices as "lighter and cheaper than iPads."

Teachers at LHS have also shared their opinions on e-books.

"I think it's really good that technology has advanced so far here," said Jessica Goodstone, a world history teacher. "E-readers would be helpful for a lot of subjects. It would be easier than a textbook because students can access them anywhere."

"I think either an iPad or Kindle is better than a computer or laptop [because] you're not [as] distracted," said Ellen Shea, another World History teacher.

However, e-books also have certain flaws.

"I think sometimes people don't read as carefully on the screen, and for some, it's harder to take notes or do annotations," said Shea.

Goodstone added that "[an electronic] screen becomes straining after a while. It could be a headache for other students, which [would] really [distract] them from their work."

"E-books can be good for not having to carry textbooks around," said Rachel Kim, a sophomore. "However, what if there was a malfunction in the iPads or Kindles? Everyone would lose their information!"

The LHS library, though, already has some e-books for the reference section.

"We're starting to purchase more for most of the library," said Harriet Wallen, a librarian, "but we believe we need books in print as well because we have all kinds of learners at Lexington High School. It's the best of both worlds."

Test Your History Prowess! (from Page 7)

Answer: William Howard Taft

COLLEGE - PAGE 7

school that they are committed to matriculating, if accepted. And typically, there is a higher admittance rate in the early applicant pool than in the regular decision pool for colleges that offer this program.

Conversely, because applying through an early action program does not necessarily show commitment, the main benefit of such programs is allowing students to know their admissions decision at an earlier date than the standard application notification.

While these programs do offer students potential benefits, I, along with many of my peers, certainly struggled with the decision of whether or not to apply early.

Early decision is a commitment — and it is one that should not be taken lightly.

Although I was fairly sure that I wanted to attend a certain school, I felt like I could be happy at many places, and I was hesitant to restrict myself to only one institution without first knowing which other schools might accept me.

On the other hand, statistics show that applying early to a school yields a higher admission rate, which is certainly an advantage in this competitive environment.

Some of my friends have expressed regret for not jumping on the early application bandwagon because they feel like they are behind their peers and will have a lesser chance of getting into colleges. But what I urge people to understand is that applying early is not a necessity — it is far from this. It is a possibility, and one that is only right for some people.

As you know, I eventually did apply early; however, I still grapple with my choice. And while I hope that I will be accepted into the school of my dreams, a consolation of being rejected or deferred will be the chance to apply to a wider array of schools in the future.

COSTUMES - PAGE 7

ly with each other, supporting one another both in and out of Costume Crew. They go shopping for clothes together, buy food for days when they stay late and spend over 10 hours a week together.

"We're such a small group that we share the same identity," said Mirani.

Sara Pion, a junior, added to that sentiment.

"Costume Crew just makes your day," she said. "Everyone makes you feel better after a bad day."

PLEDGE - PAGE 2

government meetings. Therefore, failing to open the school day with the same statement of commitment implies to students that patriotism is only valued among our elected representatives.

The fact that our town says the Pledge in elementary and middle schools, yet not at the high school, also sends a message to students. This association with grade level suggests that patriotism is an attribute to be outgrown or that it becomes less of a priority as we mature.

More than 200 years ago, the fight for independence and the right to become a free nation with our own flag began right here in Lexington. Less than a mile from our school stands the statue of a minuteman, bravely representing an unconditional commitment to fight for American values and rights.

As students in Lexington and citizens of America, we must remember the importance of honoring the flag and demonstrating pride in our country.

COOLIDGE - PAGE 4

old enough to vote."

In 2012, Coolidge plans to get involved in Obama's campaign again and run another voter registration drive.

"I think Mitt Romney is going to be the Republican nominee, just because he has a significant lead in the polls," Coolidge predicted. "I think Obama will end up beating Romney, but it will be very close."

If Coolidge were to be a politician in the future, several issues would top his agenda.

"I think for anyone, it would be jobs as the top issue," he said. "I guess I'd find some of the foreign policy issues interesting, and although I may not be able to do anything about it, I would try to address campaign financing, which is a broken system. Also, I think your job as a politician is to listen to your constituents, like if people email you about stopping global warming, then you stop global warming."

In addition to his campaign work, Coolidge recently created the Lexington Political Activism Club.

BALLROOM - PAGE 11

tion dance, because they expect them to compete," said Griner. "For adults, it's more just for fun."

She dances the cha-cha, the samba, the rumba and the jive; although the studio also teaches traditional ballroom dances, such as the waltz and the tango, Griner prefers the Latin dances.

There are two options for dancing: singles or couples.

"I do singles, so I have no official partner," said Griner. "My teacher competes with me."

The reason she does not have an official partner?

"Only the really committed dancers get to have partners," she said, "because less guys do ballroom, so it's really competitive."

The only downside to competing in singles is that there are fewer competitions to attend. On average, there are about four or five a year in the Boston area. Additionally, Griner has to pay for her teacher to go to out-of-state competitions. Nevertheless, she continues to compete regularly.

There are nine levels of competition: newcomer, bronze, open-bronze, silver, open-silver, gold, open-gold, novice/pre-champ and champ, the highest level.

Griner usually competes in the open-gold level, although she sometimes competes at a higher level "as a challenge." At the open-gold level and above, dancers have more leeway as to the steps they can use when dancing.

As a competitor in an open level, Griner is allowed to add certain steps to her routine, whereas in the non-open levels, only specific steps may be used. Even in open levels, steps from higher levels may not be used.

At competitions, dancers are broken up into heats, which are determined by level and age. Each competitor or couple is assigned a number, and the judges call them up by heat to dance.

"You dance at the same time as those in your heat, but you're not necessarily competing with everybody on the floor," said Griner.

According to Griner, the judges for the competitions are professional dancers. The judges observe the dancers in each heat and then ran individuals or singles based on several criteria, such as the performance of the steps.

Ballroom dancing is a big part of Griner's life and has even impacted her search for colleges. Tufts is her first choice, partly because they have a ballroom team. Other colleges with ballroom teams include Harvard, MIT and Brandeis, but smaller schools generally do not offer them.

Even after she finishes school, Griner has an interest in continuing to dance, though she is unsure of what career she wants to go into or where she wants to live.

"It would be great to live near a studio where I could go to dance for fun," she said.

Griner's reasons for dancing are simple.

"It's so different, especially in a town like Lexington," she said. "When I tell people they always say 'what?' It's so unique, and it looks amazing when you do it right."

OCCUPY - PAGE 3

Corporations have far too much control over the government, and consequently they are able to exploit the law and profit to the detriment of others. The recession was caused by irresponsible financial practices — and what was the outcome? The banks were bailed out and top executives continued to reap exorbitant bonuses, while unions were targeted by state governments, individual workers lost their jobs and banks reduced lending.

The implementation of Occupy Wall Street's proposals would be a significant step towards reforming American politics, guarding against future recessions and increasing corporate responsibility.

Occupy Boston is a makeshift camp of tents in Dewey Square, encircled by provocative signs, such as "Our Country is Owned by the Top 1%." One of the movement's core ideas is that the top 1 percent of the country possesses a disproportionate amount of wealth and control. "99%" buttons were a ubiquitous item at Occupy Boston because protesters claim to represent the 99 percent (the rest of the U.S. population).

The Occupiers appeared to be an amalgam of leftist college students, ex-hippies and the homeless. Supporters, who came to dole out food or participate in the discussion, were more clean-cut liberals.

The diversity of the population was remarkable. There were protesters of different races, ages, and backgrounds. This motley group evidenced the widespread appeal of the movement.

People debated nonstop, and when they disagreed they did so respectfully. The discussions reminded me of Open Circle in elementary school – everyone was free to share their opinion, and everyone was welcome.

Whether it was because of hypocrisy or powerlessness, there was a strange contradiction between the protesters' anti-corporate messages and the products they were consuming (such as Nike shoes or McDonald's coffee).

Occupy Boston hopes to involve more suburbs in the protests. One Occupier, a woman who preferred to be identified as The Grandmother, challenged high school students to get involved directly.

"Be a part of the movement you want to see," she said, alluding to Mahatma Gandhi.

When President Obama was elected in 2008, his platform was change; three years later, many around the country do not think enough change has occurred. The Occupy movement hopes to spark a wave of true change.

As The Grandmother said, "Change is scary, but it could be a good thing."

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the hospital], but my mom forced me to go. I then got surgery that same day."

Nick added, "Our parents were still freaked out the second time around. They were distraught that I wasn't going to be able to play for awhile."

Their friends and teammates were very supportive as the twins made their recovery.

"Everyone was really nice," Connor said. "People visited us at the hospital, friends brought us food, and did anything that we needed. When we came home, [our friends and teammates] came everyday and hung out. I learned that people cared about [us] a lot."

Teammate Noah Hurley, a senior, said that it was difficult to see them, especially Nick, injured and unable to play.

"Nick's injury was even more serious," Hurley said. "It was upsetting because he loves the sport more than anything."

Nevertheless, Nick said that his injury has taught him that he and other student athletes should be more appreciative of the ability to play for their teams.

"You really never know while you're playing," he said. "Don't hold back because it could be your last play."

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2011 - 2012

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The Heart of LHS: The Quad

The science behind the infamous echo >>

Staff photo by Geneva Kropper, Illustration by Greg Hines

Many students have noticed that the circular walls in the center of the main quad create interesting sound effects. If you stand in the exact center of the circle and start speaking, it will sound very strange, almost as if you were trapped in an invisible glass booth.

How does it work? As everyone knows, an echo results when a sound wave bounces off a rigid object, such as a distant cliff, and returns to the source/listener. Because the walls in the quad form a circle, a sound made in the center of the circle spreads out in all directions. The waves reflect off the walls (and floor) and return to the center, where they combine in a phenomena known as constructive interference.

But sound waves are fast. They travel at about 770 mph (340 m/s) in air. In a small space like the quad, the time lapse between the initial sound and its echo is so small that a distinct echo is not heard. Since the radius of the quad circle is about 6.5 meters, the sound you make will return to you in less than 4/100's of a second. That isn't enough time for you to hear a distinct pause, followed by an echo. Instead, your voice will sound louder and oddly external, as if you were inside that glass booth. This same amplification effect is seen in other circular or spherical structures such as the Mapparium at the Christian Science Plaza (a huge globe you can enter via a central bridge) or the circular entrance to Sever Hall at Harvard University.

By Cathy Abbot, physics teacher

We asked. You answered.

"THE QUAD IS..."

"something that sets our school apart from all the others."
Margaret Chuang, junior

"a spot to congregate with my friends"
Stephanie Yin, junior

"nothing to me"
Kyuil Lee, Eric Chiang, juniors

"a place for students to socialize."
Rachel LeBlanc, math

"a place to reconnect with people"
Lisa Lee, junior

"a place for friends to meet and talk."
Sarah Follenweider, science

"acoustically amazing."
Liam Hefferman, freshman

"a shape..."
Mitchell Ma, senior

"a fun place to hang out with friends."
Kathryn Taylor, junior

"ironically named because it's not actually surrounded by four buildings."
Veronica Wharton, junior

"a good place to meet up with people."
Hannah Rodman, freshman

"a place where you can always find a friend."
Anna Yang, junior

"a social mecca."
Rose Arslanian, junior

"not shaped like a quad?"
Emily Wu, junior

"a place where people can just relax...after school."
Jimmy Xia, junior

"where people play and form large crowds that block the general flow of traffic."
Hyunyung Boo, senior

What's hot:

- Holiday season approaching
- October snow days
- Starbucks' seasonal cups and beverages

What's not:

- Shorter days and earlier sunsets
- Random fire alarm tests
- College application deadlines
- Increased school workload

LHS Quidditch Club seeks to expand

■ Ayesha Harisinghani
Staff Writer

Although the Harry Potter movie franchise came to a close this summer, Lexington High School students now have a way to keep their fantasies alive: the Quidditch Club.

Quidditch is the primary sport in the world of Harry Potter, and this club provides a unique opportunity to bring this fictional sport to life. The club also serves as a place to meet other students who love the Harry Potter series.

The founder, freshman Peter Kukolich, was inspired to create the club even before beginning high school.

"My sister, who goes to BU [Boston University], and a bunch of her friends are on the Quidditch team," he said. "At first, I was unsure of what to think, but then … I saw them actually play and it was just amazing." From that point on, Kukolich was determined to start a Quidditch club when he got to high school.

As one might expect, real-life Quidditch is a little different from the fictional version of the sport, which includes flying broomsticks and balls with wings.

The positions and basic goals, however, are the same. Each team has three chasers, who try to throw dodgeballs into hoops located at the opposite end of the field, while avoiding the dodgeballs thrown at them by the two opposing beaters.

Each team has a keeper who guards the hoops to prevent dodgeballs from entering. A runner holding a tennis ball represents the fictional "snitch." The seekers from both teams attempt to retrieve the ball from this runner, who is on neither team.

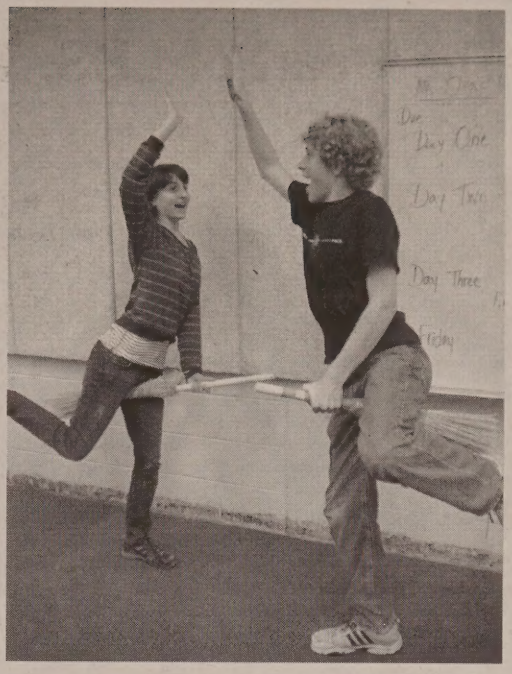
Kukolich's first challenge in starting the club was finding a faculty adviser. But, eventually, history teacher Jessica Goodstone volunteered because she is "a big Harry Potter fan" and felt that "supervising their club would be fun while helping students," she wrote in an email.

Even after finding an adviser, "organizing the club … was hard," said Kukolich. "Setting everything [dates, times, etc.] was pretty difficult."

Although the club is still in its initial stages, Kukolich already expressed his hopes for the upcoming year.

"Ideally we would get very serious about playing and begin to play ... colleges who have Quidditch teams," he said. "As of now we are still working ourselves up to that."

The Quidditch Club is still looking for new members. Those interested can come to the meetings on Thursdays after school in Room 244.



Staff photo by Thaya Psyhojos

Manager senior Abby Bokun and President and Founder freshman Peter Kukolich fly on their broomsticks.

HIGH SCHOOLERS BEE-GIN PARTICIPATION - For the first time, LHS students were allowed to take part in the Lexington Education Foundation's annual Trivia Bee. Eight teams of students competed as well as a number of LHS teachers. One team of students composed of three seniors made it to the final round of the Bee. Above, Andrew Yang, Ben Edelstein and Anna Papp rejoice after learning of their victory. (Staff Photo by Arman Bilge)

Griner proves ballroom dancing is not just a sport for old-timers

■ Brianna Lavelle
Staff Writer

When you think of ballroom dancing, do images of old-fashioned people doing the waltz come to mind?

If so, think again. Ballroom dancing has transformed into something beyond its traditional roots. Marina Griner, a senior at Lexington High School, provides an excellent example of its modern appeal.

Griner attends Dance Fever, a ballroom dance studio in Newton. For her, dancing is more than just the classes she attends.

"It's a cultural thing" she said. "Everybody speaks Russian and sometimes our teacher instructs us in Russian."

Griner loves the tight-knit community as much as the dancing itself. According to her, ballroom dancing is popular in many Russian communities.

The studio offers classes for both aduts and kids, yet there is a distinction between the two groups.

"They teach kids competi-

[BALLROOM, page 9]

Murrays cannot be stopped by injuries

■ Ellen Meyers
Sports Editor

What are the odds that a pair of Lexington High School twins on the football team would both get seriously injured only weeks apart?

Nick and Connor Murray, both seniors, learned earlier this season that this can happen.

It started during the football team's game against Concord-Carlisle High School.

"My leg began to hurt after the first quarter," said Connor. "But I didn't think of it as a big deal, but then it got really bad and the pain wouldn't go away, so I had to go to the hospital."

Connor later learned that he had compartment syndrome in his leg. According to the A.D. A. M. Medical Encyclopedia, compartment syndrome is a serious condition in which there is increased pressure in the muscle compartment. In some cases, it can lead to muscle and nerve damage and blood flow problems.

But Connor's case could have had even more severe consequences.

"I went to the hospital pretty late at night," he said. "The doctors told me that if I had waited until the morning to go, I would've lost my leg."

Three weeks later, Nick was injured in the middle of a game against Melrose, fracturing two vertebrae and a lower rib.

"Doctors said I was lucky that my spinal cord was OK," Nick said.

After several days in the hospital, both Murray brothers were put on bedrest before returning to school. Originally, their doctors had assumed that both brothers would miss the rest, but Connor made a surprisingly fast recovery and was only out for three games.

Nick was told that he would probably "be out for the season."

Determined to play again, he proved the doctors wrong. In mid-November doctors cleared Nick to go back to football, and he played for the remainder of the season. Before, Connor had to fill in for his brother as free safety, while teammate Shane Foley took Connor's original position on the team, as quarterback.

"Shane [has done] an awesome job," Connor said. "He could play right now instead of me."

As one can imagine, the Murray brothers said that their parents had been extremely worried about their injuries.

"My parents were freaked out by the freakishness of my injury," Connor said. "My dad didn't want me to go [to

[MURRAY, page 9]

Staff photo by Thaya Psyhojos

Construction vehicles remain parked between large mounds of dirt as the high school's softball and baseball fields are redone.

Construction on LHS fields begins: Softball, baseball fields are repaired

■ Kyle Harvey
Josh Karnofsky
Staff Writers

The center baseball and softball fields have never drained properly, but that is set to change.

The fields are managed by the Lexington Recreation Department, which agreed to contract for "stripping, amending and re-spreading the existing topsoil; re-grading installation of new subsurface drainage infrastructure and renovation to the softball and baseball infield areas to improve drainage," according to the Lexington Department of Public Works.

Construction began in mid-August, and most students and residents have noticed the huge mounds of dirt piling up on the fields, indicating that the project is well underway.

Revamping the baseball and softball fields will affect a large number of Lexington residents.

"It benefits the entire [Lexington] community, not just the sub-group of student athletes," said Naomi Martin, the LHS athletic director.

Although the Lexington Recreation Department reserves the fields after school for the high school and middle schools, the department gives out permits to youth teams as well as adult teams such as the Blue Sox of the Intercity Baseball League.

The fields are also used for recreational soccer, ultimate frisbee and other out-of-school activities.

LHS baseball players, who rely heavily on the fields in the spring, have expressed their discontent in previous seasons.

"I remember not wanting to play because the field was too wet," said Andrew Johnston, a junior who played on the freshman baseball team.

Issues arose during the games, too.

"If you were playing in the outfield, you'd have to look out for the ruts," said Matt Almeida, a junior. Almeida plays junior varsity baseball.

Despite these issues, the highest priority is to ensure that games can be played whenever possible.

"[The new fields] won't lose games to cancellations," said Martin.

The root of these problems is that the existing fields were built on peat, a squishy moss that caused the fields to be less sturdy and to drain ineffectively. The maintenance is currently in phase one, in which the peat of the baseball and softball fields is replaced with sod, a faster and more reliable alternative to seeding.

According to the plan, in the upcoming years similar maintenance on the football and track fields will occur in phases two and three.

Heimlich Landscaping and Construction was awarded the contract for $531,148. Other landscaping companies that were considered for the job asked for about $100,000 more than Heimlich.

Funding comes from the Community Preservation Act, which provides money for the acquisition and preservation of land for open space, housing, historical purposes and recreation. A 3 percent surcharge on Lexington real estate taxes pays for the CPA, along with contributions from the state.

Those who use the field feel that the money is well-spent.

"A well-thought out idea," said Johnston. "The baseball fields are very important to LHS students and the drainage issues were too problematic to not be addressed."

The plan is to have the fields ready after April vacation, ideally in time for the spring season.

Significant improvements will be seen immediately after the baseball and softball fields are done, but the full effect of these changes will not be felt until all three phases are complete, Martin said.

Swim team adjusts to pool and opponents

■ Ellen Meyers
Sports Editor
Stephanie Yost
Staff Writer

For the majority of Lexington High School's sports teams, student athletes enjoy the home field advantage. For members of the girls swim and dive team, however, they were unable to start the season with a home field at all.

The team normally practices at Minuteman Regional High School's pool. But three days before their first practice at Minuteman, the team found that the pool was closed for renovations until October.

"The beginning of the year was tough on the girls," Ann Boudrot, one of the team's coaches, wrote in an email. "We were able to swim at the Atkinson pool in Sudbury, which meant we needed to take a bus to and from practice."

The major problem with relocating the team's practices was that the commute was 40 minutes each way, and the team's practices were two hours long, making the sport more time-consuming than ever.

But the co-captains, seniors Colleen Hughes and Allison Bukys, feel that the change in routine has benefited their team.

"We all complained about the time commitment," Hughes said, "but I think that we're a really close team because we've spent so much time together everyday, and now we're all just excited to be back at Minuteman."

Hughes also said that the Atkinson pool was a "really nice pool," with eight lanes and an automatic timing system.

The new location for their practices was not the only change this season.

Boudrot and Chris Randall also became the new coaches for the team. Still, even with all of the changes, the team won the Middlesex League meet against Reading, one of their biggest rivals.

"I can't say enough good things about Ann and Chris," said Bukys. "We've done better against [Acton-Boxborough] and Reading than we have since [my] freshman year."

She added, "I'm so glad that the swim team experience is going to be as amazing for incoming freshman as it has been for my four years."

The coaches were also impressed with the team.

"The girls really made the best of it and worked really hard at staying focused at the task at hand," Boudrot wrote. "I am proud of the girls. They were able to adapt to the changes thrown at them at the beginning of the season and not swimming in their home pool to start [and] ... all the girls showed up to swim everyday and worked really hard at each practice."

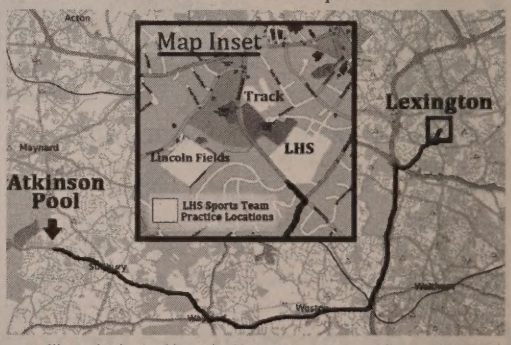


Illustration by Anubhav Jain (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, CC-BY-SA

Most Lexington sports teams only have to travel short distances to practice, as shown by the map inset.

Fall Sports Records: W-L-T in regular season

Girls' Varsity Soccer:	*14-1-3*	*Freshman Field Hockey:*	*2-5-4*
Girls' JV Soccer:	*5-10-2*	*Girls' Cross Country:*	*7-0*
Girls' Freshman Soccer:	*6-2-4*	*Boys' Cross Country:*	*7-0*
Boys' Varisty Soccer:	*8-4-5*	*Varsity Golf:*	*7-4*
Boys' JV Soccer:	*11-0-5*	*Developmental Golf:*	*2-2*
Boys' Freshman Soccer:	*10-3*	*Varsity Volleyball:*	*12-8*
Varsity Field Hockey:	*7-7-2*	*JV Volleyball:*	*14-6*
JV Field Hockey:	*12-1-1*	*Freshman Volleyball:*	*13-3*

THANK YOU

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